

FITNESS

The Primary Role of Exercise

Now there are even more reasons to be active. It has long been known that regular exercise helps prevent obesity and the extra cancer risk excess body fat brings. New evidence shows that physical activity may be a primary way to lower cancer risk, as well as improve cancer survival, no matter what your weight. Exercise should be a part of your lifestyle, even if you're within a normal range for your body size.

For those with excess weight, physical activity may reset many of the body's functions disrupted by being overweight. For example, studies indicate that a range of hormones and other "growth factors" are produced in large amounts by the fat cells of overweight and obese individuals. Exercise helps regulate the production of these hormones. But there are benefits for everyone. Activity decreases the overproduction of male or female hormones related to the risk for cancers of the breast, prostate, endometrium, ovary and testes. It also improves the body's natural antioxidant defense systems and strengthens other immune defenses as well.

If you don't have much free time, try for several 10-minute bursts of activity throughout the day. Three 10-minute sessions can provide the same health benefits as exercising in one 30-minute block of time. Here are some suggestions.

- Park the car at the edge of the lot and walk to the store.
- Make a point of taking the stairs rather than elevators and escalators.
- Walk around the block on your lunch break or take the dog for a brisk walk.
- Try water aerobic classes at your local community center.
- Arrange a weekly game of your favorite sport with friends or coworkers.
- Fly a kite, throw a frisbee, play softball or stroll in a park.

When the cold weather keeps you from going outside, try one of these ideas.

- Fitness videos can provide a whole new way for you to stay active. There are videos on everything from stretching to aerobics to strength training.
- Do some housework. Vacuum, scrub, dust, clean your closets, organize the attic or wash the windows.

Exercise should be included in your daily routine. Make exercise a part of your life. The Prevention Partners program has many products to help put you on the right track. To find out more about the products Prevention Partners offers visit www.eip.state.sc.us and click on Prevention Partners logo and click on product and services.



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